

SWAFFHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR
THE YEAR ENDED 31st. DECEMBER,
1945.

Medical Officer of Health.....R.O. Townend, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.
Sanitary Inspector.....R.F. Hudson, A.R.San.I., M.S.I.A.
Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my first annual report after some six years absence. Before proceeding to the stereotyped form of report dealing with statistics etc. my impressions after my rather long absence may be of interest.

Water Supply.

I was astonished to find that though the Pickenham aerodrome had...during the war... provided itself with an unlimited supply from nothing, the Swaffham Waterworks continued to give an utterly inadequate service with more complaints than ever before the war of the sediment.

The hardness of the town supply is I still contend, a matter of some gravity, especially in these days of soap and tea rationing, and I would again stress the fact that without undue cost a percentage softening apparatus could be fixed at source which would materially improve the quality of the water and encourage potential manufacturers to consider the town in a better light. I believe that the Swaffham water is one of the hardest in the British Isles and as such, though organically pure for drinking, the amount of calcium in solution taken continuously must produce...ultimately...retrograde metabolic processes which are deleterious to health. Medical text books for example give "hard water" as one of the suggested causes of Derbyshire neck or goitre while it is an established fact that the soft waters of spas are beneficial to rheumatic cases from hard water areas. I cannot too strongly stress that this amenity to the townsfolk should be considered and pressed for.

British Restaurant.

In my absence British Restaurants were inauguated. These I understand are in the nature of canteens for the working folk of the district. There are I think three in the rural district which are howling successes but I understand a Restaurant for Swaffham was turned down by your Council, I cannot help but feel that this refusal has been a very short sighted policy as it enables the farm labourer to increase his meat and fat ration which he so sorely misses, and I would respectfully suggest that the commencement of a British Restaurant might be reconsidered.

Rationing.

Here again less food is obtainable than at any time during the worst of the submarine sinkings. I fail to see how two old people can manage on the fat ration without outside help and I am quite certain that the amount of work the farm labourer can do is in direct proportion to the amount of energy value in his food. Worked out by calories the farm labourer is alleged to require some 4000 calories a day, but from personal experience in testing out iron and jungle rations in the army, I know that while calories are of importance a varied diet is absolutely essential if one is to get the best out of man.

I cannot help but feel that the nation as a whole will suffer from the present innutritious diet. At present the townsman scores where he can augment his rations from a canteen while the poor countryman gets the bare ration and suffers accordingly.

I cannot believe myself that the stories of world food shortage while it is inconceivable that Britain as a nation is shorter of food than she was in 1915 or 1942 when rations were ample. The morale of the housewife suffers from standing in queues to get the odd tit bit to tickle her husbands jaded palate.

I now come to the statistical side of the report.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area.....	7592 acres.
Resident Population.....	2571.
Number of inhabited houses(end of 1945)....	958.
Rateable Value.....	£11,558.
Product of Penny Rate.....	£46.

Swaffham is a Market Town, the centre of a large Agricultural district, upon which industry it chiefly relies. The only other industries of any note carried on in the area are a canning factory and malting, there are also two big firms of hauliers.

Transport facilities are supplied by the L & N.E. Railway Company and the Eastern Counties Omnibus Company and other bus services.

The town is supplied with gas, water and electricity by Statutory Companies.

The Council own a Cemetery and Recreation Ground.

	Total.	M.	F.	
Live Births Legitimate...	33	21	12.	Birth rate per 1000
Illegitimate...	3	1	2	population..14.002.
Stillbirths Legitimate...	3	1	2	100 per 1000 total
Illegitimate...	1	1	-	births.
Deaths.....	31	15	16	12.057 per 1000
				population.

Deaths from Puerperal Causes:-

	Deaths.	Rate per 1000 total births.
No. 29 Puerperal Sepsis.....	Nil.	Nil.
No. 30 Other Puerperal Causes..	Nil.	Nil.

Death rate of Infants under one year of age:-

All infants per 1000 live births.....	27.777
Legitimate infants per 1000 Legitimate live births.....	30.303
Illegitimate infants per 1000 Illegitimate live bkrths..	Nil.

Deaths from Cancer(all ages).....	5
Measles(all ages).....	Nil.
Whooping Cough(all ages).....	Nil.
Diarrhoea(under 2 years of age).....	Nil.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Staff.

The Medical Officer of Health is part-time; the Sanitary Inspector also carries out the duties of Highway Surveyor and Building Surveyor and is a full-time officer of the Council.

Ambulance Facilities.

Facilities for the conveyance of sick persons by ambulance are provided by the joint organisation of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and the British Red Cross Society, both of whom have companies in the town. The ambulance is driven by members of the St. John Ambulance Brigade and has done exceptionally fine work throughout the year.

Nursing in the Home.

Nursing for sick persons and maternity cases is provided for by the presence of a district nurse resident in the town. There is too much work for one nurse, and when the nursing situation becomes easier, the town should be efficiently serviced by two nurses - one a maternity and child welfare nurse and the other doing general nursing duties. Extremely good work is being done by the present nurse who is being definitely over-worked.

Treatment Centres and Clinics.

No Venereal Disease Clinic has been established in the town nor is needed with the excellent centre at Lynn.

The Infant Welfare Clinic meets once a month and is run by the Norfolk County Council. The accommodation for this clinic is very poor, and this is a decided factor in the poor attendance.

Hospital.

The town is served by a cottage hospital which has 1 private room, 3 female beds and 7 male beds and an operating theatre and casualty room. Serious cases are sent to the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital or the West Norfolk and King's Lynn General Hospital. Infectious diseases can be sent to the Norfolk County Council Isolation Hospital at Dereham.

There are no facilities for X-rays or pathological investigations at Swaffham.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water.

Water is supplied by the Swaffham Waterworks Co. Ltd.. The water is chlorinated at its source and the limits of supply is within a radius of 1,500 yards from the Market Place.

The water continued to be turned off from midnight to 6 a.m. throughout the year. Correspondence passed between your Council and the Company and the Ministry of Health, expressing the Council's concern at the unsatisfactory state of the Towns Water supplies. In November, 1945, a deputation from your Council, interviewed officials of the Ministry of Health in London and laid all the facts of the position before them including:-

- (a) the Company were not meeting their obligations in providing a continuous supply,
- (b) the storage capacity was insufficient, and
- (c) the mains were in a bad state.

At the close of the year your Council was awaiting further developments.

Water contd.

In connection with your Council's Housing Programme the Water Company, at the request of the Council, agreed to extend the 3" water main in Watton Road on to the Housing Site.

Drainage & Sewerage.

A combined system of sewerage exists in your Council's area. The system caused no trouble during the year apart from the usual blowing of Manholes during heavy rainfall.

The sewage disposal Works are situated on the Watton Road about 1½ miles from the town. The system is a crude method of land irrigation, and I would again stress the desirability of an improved method of treatment to meet the future requirements of the town.

Closet Accommodation.

About a third of the houses in the town are still on the conservancy system. Every effort is made to get these converted to water closets as they become defective, but a comprehensive scheme of conversion is not possible at the present time owing to the shortage of materials and the present Civil Building Control.

Public Cleansing.

The collection of household refuse has continued as in previous years, the number of dust bins being approximately 960. Salvage has continued to be collected during the year.

HOUSING.

Preliminary work on post war housing was proceeded with and at the end of the year a contract for site preparation including concrete roads and sewers was in hand, to accommodate 42 houses. In December tenders were accepted for 10 three bedroom houses of the Traditional type.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

	<u>Inspections.</u>	<u>Informal Notices.</u>	<u>Remarks.</u>
Drainage.	25	10	Work done.
Factories, Workshops and Bakehouses.	5	1	Work done.
Slaughterhouses and Butchers' shops.	156	1	Work done.
Food shops. (including Fried Fish).	44	-	Inspection of tinned food etc.
Cowsheds, Dairies etc.	9	2	Work done.
Restaurants.	4	2	Work done.
Housing.	44	17	Work done. One by Statutory Notice.

<u>Contd.</u>	<u>Inspections.</u>	<u>Informal Notices.</u>	<u>Remarks.</u>
Nuisances.	5	5	Work done.
Infectious Diseases.	3	-	Reports to M.O.H.
Rats & Mice.	6	-	War. Agricult- ural Committee notified.
Dust bins.	-	46	Provided.

INSPECTION & SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Milk Supply.

The whole of the registered premises were inspected during the year, and instructions given to lsmewwhite when necessary, One producer had his cowsheds reconstructed and an electric steriliser installed with a view to making application for an accredited licence.

Meat and other Foods.

Shops and slaughterhouses have been regularly inspected and usually found to be clean and tidy.

CARCASES INSPECTED AND CONDEMNED.

	<u>Cattle.</u>	<u>Calves.</u>	<u>Sheep & Lambs.</u>	<u>Pigs.</u>
Approximate number killed.	562	4	884	43
Approximate number inspected	562	4	884	43
<u>All diseases except Tuberculosis.</u>				
Whole carcasses condemned.	1	-	23	1
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned.	148	-	11	4
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis.	26.51	-	3.85	11.86
<u>Tuberculosis only.</u>				
Whole carcasses condemned.	8	-	-	1
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned.	94	-	-	1
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis.	18.15	-	-	4.65

MEAT, OFFAL AND OTHER FOOD CONDEMNED.

	<u>Cattle.</u>	<u>Sheep.</u>	<u>Pigs.</u>
Carcases or parts of carcases.	5719 lbs.	466 lbs.	280 lbs.
Offal.....	4797 lbs.	711 lbs.	52 lbs.
Tinned Food (Grocers' Shops).	164 tins.		
Tinned meat (Butchers' shops).	6 tins.		
Bacon.....	40 lbs.		
Cheese.....	84 lbs.		
Margarine.....	21 lbs.		
Rolled Oats.....	10 lbs.		
Oat Meal.....	10 lbs.		
Sweets.....	7 lbs.		

PREVALENCE OF, & CONTROL OVER, INFECTIOUS & OTHER DISEASES.

Notifiable diseases during the year 1945.

Disease.	Total cases notified.	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Scarlet Fever.	8	-	-
Whooping Cough.	1	-	-
Diphtheria.	-	-	-
Erysipelas.	-	-	-
Measles.	29	-	-
Pneumonia.	1	-	-
Puerperal Pyrexia.	-	-	-
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis.	1	-	-

Cases notified under age groups.

Disease.	2-	4-	5-10	10-15	15-20	20-35	35-45	45-65.
Scarlet Fever.	-	1	6	1	-	-	-	-
Whooping Cough.	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Diphtheria.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Erysipelas.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Measles.	3	8	15	3	-	-	-	-
Pneumonia.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Puerperal Pyrexia.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis.	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-

TUBERCULOSIS.

New cases and Mortality during 1945.

Age periods.	New Cases.				Deaths. (atory.			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory.		Respiratory		Non-Respir-	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
2-10								
10-20								
20-30			1.					
30-40		1.						
40-50	1.							
50-60								
60-70								
(or over)			- 6 -					

Diphtheria Immunisation.

Diphtheria Immunisation has improved somewhat during the year. The following are the figures as at the 31st. December, 1945.

Children under 5 years.....94.00%

Children between 5-15 years...44.8%

The District Nurse has done valuable work in advising mothers of young children to have them immunised.

Scabies.

Scabies has largely died out.

Tuberculosis.

3 new cases were notified during the year.

No deaths occurred.

The number of cases on the register at the end of the year was 24.

Venereal Diseases.

Only very occasional cases of primary venereal disease have occurred during the year. These are treated at King's Lynn.

General Remarks.

The year has been a healthy one for the population in the district. I would like to stress my remarks re. the softening of the water supply and the extermination of pail and vault closets.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

R.O. Townend.

Medical Officer of Health.

